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78 SEOUL 682

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ACTION EA-12
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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8933
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E.O. 11652: N A
TAGS: SOPN KS US
SUBJ: PRESS COVERAGE OF PAK TONGSUN CASE
REF: SEOUL 0523

SUMMARY: ALL JANUARY 25 PRESS FRONTPAGED BOTH UPI STORY REP. ERTEL INTRODUCED RESOLUTION DEMANDING PTS AND ROKG OFFICIALS TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESS AND COMMENT WHICH WAS PREDICTABLY NEGATIVE, CLAIMING INFRINGEMENT OF ROK SOVEREIGNTY. MOFA OFFICIALS QUOTED IN STRONGLY-WORDED STATEMENTS SAYING RESOLUTION "REGRETTABLE" AND ADDING ROKG POSITION WILL BE DECIDED "EARLY NEXT WEEK". REUTERS STORY ON SENATOR WEICKER SENATE RESOLUTION CARRIED AS STRAIGHT NEWS ITEM. END SUMMARY.

1. ALL PRESS COVERED INTRODUCTION HOUSE RESOLUTION "INDICATING U.S. AID TO SOUTH KOREA MIGHT BE CUT OFF IF THE SEOUL GOVERNMENT DOES NOT COOPERATE" IN PTS CASE. QUOTED SPEAKER O'NEILL SAYING ALL AID IS AFFECTED, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC -- "AS I READ THE HOUSE, THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE DIFFICULTY GETTING ANY KIND OF AID FOR KOREA".

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2. MOFA OFFICIALS QUOTED AS DESCRIBING RESOLUTION AS A "MATTER OF GREAT REGRET", NOTING ETHICS COMMITTEE MADE THIS MOVE AT TIME WHEN PTS QUESTIONING IN SEOUL IS PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY. FURTHER QUOTES MOFA OFFICIALS SAYING "SUCH A MOVE IS LIKELY TO INCITE THE SENTIMENTS OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE AND IS IN COMPLETE DISREGARD OF INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES". QUESTION IF THE REAL MOTIVE OF RESOLUTION WAS TO GAIN ROKG COOPERATION BY SUCH "HIGH-HANDED" ACTION. TERMED RESOLUTION "COERCIVE" MEASURE. QUOTES MOFA OFFICIALS REFERRING TO RESOLUTION AS "BIG POWER POLITICS" AND SEEMING TO BE "POLITICAL GESTURE". ADDS ROKG POSITION TOWARD CONGRESS WILL BE DECIDED EARLY NEXT WEEK BEFORE AMBASSADOR KIM YOUNG SHIK'S RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

3. HANGUK ILBO COMMENTARY ATTRIBUTES RESOLUTION TO JAWORSKI'S INITIATIVE AS ATTEMPT TO PREVENT AMERICAN CRITICISM THAT HE FAILED TO COMPLETELY INVESTIGATE KOREAGATE. THINKS THAT HOUSE WILL DELAY APPROVAL OF RESOLTUION TO SEE ROKG REACTION AND THUS THERE IS TIME



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FOR US/ROK NEGOTIATIONS. SELECTED COMMENTS NOTE PTS MAY LIKELY TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESS EVENTUALLY, BUT HOUSE RESOLUTION IS NOT HELPFUL IN ATTAINMENT THIS GOAL. MOFA SOURCE QUOTED SAYING "THIS ACTION WILL BRING NO HELP WHATSOEVER IN SETTLEMENT OF THIS ISSUE--RATHER IT WILL CREATE ADDITIONAL OBSTACLES". TONGA ILBO'S KIM SUNG IK COMMENTS LESSON TO BE LEARNED IS THAT THIS IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF STRONG NATIONS TRYING TO DOMINATE WEAKER NATIONS, AND KOREANS SHOULD SEE U.S. NOT JUST AS "BIG BROTHER" BUT ALSO AS A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

4. GOSSIP COLUMNS POINT OUT THAT FONMIN PARK TONG JIN CONSULTED WITH PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER ROKG OFFICIALS BEFORE ISSUANCE OF MOFA STATEMENT, AND ROKG POSITION

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WAS CONVEYED TO U.S. CHARGE STERN AFTERNOON OF JAN. 24.

5. KYUNGHYANG SINMUN REPORTS PTS LAWYER HUNDLEY SCHEDULED TO LEAVE SEOUL ON JAN 27 (DESTINATION NOT GIVEN). DOJ MICHEL QUOTED AS SAYING "QUESTIONING WILL CONTINUE UNTIL NEXT WEEK".

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